



# FPC PRESS RELEASE

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## **GLA's Supermarket Protocol must give equality to suppliers**

The Fresh Produce Consortium is calling for greater scrutiny of the Gangmasters Licensing Agency (GLA)'s draft protocol between supermarkets and the GLA to ensure equality for suppliers and retention of GLA independence.

"There are some key concerns for suppliers raised in this protocol which demonstrate the need for the GLA to seek a better understanding of the views of suppliers/labour users before developing the protocol further. We welcome the GLA's consultation launched today and will be encouraging our members to participate," commented Nigel Jenney, Chief Executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium. "It is essential to ensure that the GLA and all sectors of the supply chain understand fully the impact of this proposed protocol."

The protocol raises concerns about the sharing of sensitive commercial information obtained during joint retailer/GLA visits to suppliers and the potential use of retailers' commercial power in the supply chain as an extension of the operational powers of the GLA.

The GLA should apply the powers provided within its remit rather than depend upon commercial relationships between retailers and their suppliers.

Under the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004 which established the GLA a labour provider is allowed the right of appeal. In the GLA and Supermarkets' protocol, no such right of appeal is afforded to a labour user that the GLA considers to be complicit in worker exploitation.

The GLA has worked successfully to curb the exploitation of workers by harnessing the support and goodwill of all elements of the food supply chain, from labour users, suppliers (processors and packers) to retailers. The GLA has already demonstrated, through a number of its activities, how working with the supply chain can lead to positive outcomes and bring rogue gangmasters to book.

“It’s vital that the development of the GLA and Supermarkets’ protocol treats retailers and suppliers as ‘equal and constructive partners’ and does not undermine relationships between retailers and their suppliers/labour users. The protocol must work fairly and effectively for all parties involved in the supply chain to maximise the protection of vulnerable workers,” added Nigel Jenney. “Unless it works fairly and effectively for all parties involved in the supply chain this protocol should be rejected. We urge suppliers to take part in the GLA’s consultation and FPC will be ensuring that their views are heard.”

**Ends**

**Notes for editors:**

1. The Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC) is the UK’s fresh produce trade association and is based in Peterborough. The FPC has represented the fresh produce sector for many years and is recognised across the UK and EU as the voice of the industry.
2. Extensive membership covers the complete spectrum of industry businesses including growers, importers, wholesalers, retailers, distributors, processors, packers, food service companies and other allied organisations.

**Ends**